

Washington, DC – Today, Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), a senior member of the House Budget and Ways and Means Committees, released the following statement regarding the ongoing debt ceiling debate:

I voted against this debt reduction plan because government on autopilot, locked in a slow downward spiral, is not a victory.

For weeks now, we've faced the artificial Republican debt crisis, which was a Republican crisis of choice. This agreement may spare a short term default, but it leaves us vulnerable, delaying important work while weakening both the economy and the decision-making process.

First, this proposal empowers the most reckless and extreme elements, not just in for House Republican caucus today, but as a blueprint for mischief for either party in the future. It will make it exceedingly difficult for the House to meet its governing responsibilities.

Next, we are starting down a path of budget cuts that all the experts assure us will weaken the economy at exactly the time we need to strengthen economic growth, not reduce demand.

Clearly, it is a step backwards from reforming how the country does business. The fixation on triggers, formulas and Super Committees will make it easier for Congress to duck the difficult policy work and harder to do it if Congress wants to try.

Even as we avoid outright default, this agreement casts a long-term shadow on our nation's reasonableness and our reliability for the next two years and beyond.

We all remember the drama over the continuing resolution earlier this year. There are two potential government shutdowns over the next 14 months that will invite more legislative blackmail over an extreme agenda, since it's clear that recklessness now works.

This is all the more frustrating because the path forward is clear. The public strongly supports a balanced approach, which would include tax reform that would raise money while making the tax code more fair and simple.

Everyone knows we must deal with health care costs and until recently there was bipartisan agreement as to how to do that. We should accelerate the health care reforms which are already enacted into law but do it faster to improve care and lower costs.

Do we need to require a commission to implement bipartisan suggestions to right-size the military, both its mission and its budget? Absolutely not. There are many good ideas circulating around and support on both sides of the aisle to move on them now.

Most important, we should revitalize the economy by rebuilding and renewing America, financed by modest increases in user fees.

Finally, one of the simplest steps would be to implement bipartisan suggestions to reform agriculture. We could save money while helping people who farm and people who eat while reducing massive, unnecessary subsidies to large agribusiness.